

Departmental Administration Strategic Plan



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Introduction

Departmental Administration (DA) is USDA's central administrative management organization with responsibility for the leadership and oversight for cross-cutting administrative management activities in each of the USDA's mission areas and staff offices. In support of USDA's goal to expand economic and trade opportunities for agricultural producers and other rural residents, DA's operations and activities involve timely, accurate, and high-quality delivery of products and services related to civil rights; small and disadvantaged business utilization; outreach programs; human resources management; procurement and property management; and safe and healthy work environments. To support USDA's efforts to promote good government and provide our services efficiently and effectively, DA is committed to ensuring that USDA's administrative processes and systems are the best in the business. DA will work in partnership with USDA's mission areas, staff offices, and external agencies to successfully meet diverse customer needs and to improve administrative management activities in conjunction with the technological, demographic, and financial challenges and opportunities before us. DA will continually reassess and adapt its strategies in response to changing customer and employee needs, resource allocations, and statutory and regulatory requirements. These efforts combine to support USDA's goals of ensuring a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply, and providing a sensible management of our natural resources. Accomplishment of our goals and objectives will enable DA to significantly improve customer service and establish DA's reliability as a center of excellence in administrative business practices and policy.

DA

Legislative Mandates

In addition to the Government Performance and Results Act, the National Performance Review, and the various other administrative and statutory requirements that guide the activities and programs conducted in Departmental Administration, much of the activities and processes in operation in DA fulfill various legislative mandates. The goals, objectives, and tasks incorporated in this strategic plan will allow DA to successfully respond to these requirements through our various programs and activities.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) provides Department-wide policy development, leadership, coordination, and oversight to prohibit discrimination in all aspects of the employer-employee relationship on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin under Title VII of The Civil Rights Act of 1964; to prevent inequitable payment to employees performing equal work with equal skills, effort, and responsibility, based solely on gender under the Equal Pay Act of 1963; to protect applicants and employees aged 40-70 from age discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, and other aspects of employment in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1967; and to prohibit unreasonable discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance in response to the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. In response to the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the OCR works to ensure that the USDA workforce is reflective of the Nation's diversity.

In response to the Government Organizations and Employees Act (Title 5 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations) and Administrative Personnel Act (Title 5 CFR), DA's Human Resource Management (HRM) staff provides high-quality leadership, stewardship, consultation, guidance, programs, and services to provide a competent workforce that meets the HRM expectations of USDA customers. In addition to satisfying these statutory requirements, HRM also works to fulfill all Executive Orders from the President, such as the Welfare to Work and Career Transition Assistance programs.

To fulfill the requirements of the Executive Order on Customer Service, Title 7 CFR Section 2.24, and the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and USDA Reorganization

Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-354), DA is committed to providing best-in-the-business administrative management, policies, products, and services.

By maintaining and operating buildings, facilities, and lands; and providing cost-efficient, centralized services such as health units, mail and other distribution, and printing and duplicating services, the Office of Operations satisfies P.L. 92-313, 40 U.S.C. 486, the Public Contracts and Property Management Act (CFR 41 Chapter 101), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Act (CFR 29 Parts 1900-1926), and Executive Order 12902 on Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation at Federal Facilities.

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization fosters the use of small, disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned businesses as Federal contractors, and acts as a prime contractor and enters into contracts with other Federal agencies, negotiating subcontracts with small companies within the program. These activities are conducted under the Minority Business Enterprise, the Women's Business Enterprise Program, and the Small Business Competitiveness Program by authority of P.L. 95-507, P.L. 100-656, and 15 U.S.C. FAR 19.8.

DA's Procurement and Property Management (PPM) staff acquires, manages, uses, accounts for the costs of, and disposes of personal and real property and aircraft under Title 41 CFR Chapter 101 Federal Property Management Regulations, and OMB Circular A-126 on Improving the Management and Use of Government Aircraft. In response to Executive Order 13031 Federal Alternative Fueled Vehicle Leadership, PPM fulfills the alternative fueled vehicle acquisition requirements, and enters into contracts solely to achieve energy savings, installs energy and water conservation measures, and incorporates waste prevention and recycling under the Energy Policy Act (P.L. 102-486).

The Hazardous Waste Management Group serves as resource and advisor for environmental compliance, pollution prevention and source reduction (P2/SR), reducing potential liabilities in property transactions, environmental justice, and other environmental management issues, concepts, and systems in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (42 U.S.C., 9601), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Title 42, U.S.C. 6961), the Pollution Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 13101 et seq.), and the Oil Pollution Act (33 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.).

Key External Factors

Executive and legislative direction and the voice of the customer combine to present the requirement and the mandates for greater efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in program and service delivery. Balancing the budget, the Government Performance and Results Act and the National Performance Review, and public opinion about the amount and quality of our programs and products are the key change agents that will drive DA's operations and activities.

Mission

To provide the most effective and efficient administrative management and leadership in the delivery of its products and services to support USDA agencies and enable the Department to reach its programmatic goals.

Goals.....

Goal 1

All USDA employees and customers are treated fairly and equitably with dignity and respect. The USDA will have the best civil rights record among Federal agencies. (USDA-wide goal)

As USDA's lead organization for civil rights policy and direction, DA will dedicate resources to: 1) Implement the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) recommendations; 2) review, and as necessary revise, administrative and program policies and resources to focus more attention on civil rights and equal employment opportunities, as well as strengthen outreach efforts to underserved customers; 3) improve the timeliness and responsiveness of the complaint process and system; and 4) hold agency heads accountable for implementation of agency outreach plans through a civil rights element in performance standards. We are committed to increasing the opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses to participate in USDA contract and program activities.

DA

■ Objective 1.1

Fully implement the CRAT report recommendations that were approved by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Develop plans, policies, and strategies and obtain funding to implement the approved CRAT recommendations.
- Develop a legislative package to revise existing farm policies to improve services to minority farmers.
- Modernize civil rights systems and processes.

Performance Measures

- Fewer civil rights formal complaints by both customers and employees
Baseline: 600 per year
Target: 200 per year
- Number of backlog complaints
Baseline: 2,271
Target: 0
- USDA services more accessible to minority farmers
Baseline: Accessibility of USDA programs being determined by Civil Rights Implementation Team (CRIT) process
Target: Increase accessibility by 50%

■ Objective 1.2

Establish outreach programs to meet needs and expectations of underserved customers.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish an outreach office.
- Identify customer needs and expectations of underserved customers.
- Develop and implement outreach policy and procedures.

Performance Measures

- Customer satisfaction
 - Baseline:** Customer satisfaction based on a customer survey conducted with underserved customers (FY 98)
 - Target:** Increase customer satisfaction by 50%
- Number of underserved customers reached and full USDA services provided
 - Baseline:** Number of traditional underserved customers (to be determined in 1998)
 - Target:** Reach 50% of underserved customers with full services and products

■ Objective 1.3

Increase opportunities for small, disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses to participate in USDA contract and program activities.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish and implement policies and procedures that enhance agency accountability and use of small, disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses to fulfill USDA program and contract requirements.
- Establish partnerships and pilot initiatives to increase the utilization of small businesses, while providing the expected support to our customers.
- Establish a USDA Federal small business advisory committee to provide guidance and partnerships and enhance support for small business use.
- Modernize the delivery of technical and contract assistance information, and support agency solicitation of bids and contracts with small, disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses.

Performance Measures

- Annual participation rates of small, disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses.
 - Baseline:** 10% of current annual contracts are small business set-asides
 - Target:** 50% of annual contracts are small business set-asides

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Goal 2

Provide leadership to efficiently and effectively manage human and administrative resources throughout USDA. (USDA-wide goal)

Based on the goals and priorities of USDA leadership, DA has the lead in simplifying and streamlining human and administrative resources and systems to the greatest extent possible. We intend to reduce the amount of administrative responsibilities cur-

rently handled in USDA's mission areas and agencies by addressing organizational tasks of providing policy, guidance, direction, standards, management, priority setting, and performance. We will provide information and resources to mission areas and agencies affected by reforms. We plan to link the right activities and ideas with the right individuals who are dedicated to adding value to our customer service.

We recognize the need for a highly skilled and productive workforce and are working to ensure that every employee has the skills and tools required to successfully perform his or her job. We are building a strong and skilled administrative management community as the foundation for delivering quality administrative products and services throughout the USDA. We recognize the increasing level of cultural diversity in the USDA workforce, and will train employees and managers to maximize the potential for integrating the various skills and opportunities that diversity affords.

■ Objective 2.1

Ensure core uniformity in key administrative policies for procurement, operations, and human resources management throughout USDA.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Coordinate with agencies to develop clear, current, concise, and consistent policy and procedures.
- Simplify administrative policies.
- Identify and use technology to enhance the dissemination and understanding of policies and guidance.
- Develop a feedback process to capture customer issues and concerns.
- Plan and develop, in coordination with the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the administrative convergence activities for the county-based agencies.

Performance Measures

- Customer satisfaction

Baseline: Customer satisfaction based on a customer survey conducted with underserved customers (FY 98)

Target: Increase customer satisfaction by 50%

- Administrative convergence

Baseline: Administrative workforce to keep pace with projected programmatic \ reductions

Target: Reduce administrative staffing as recommended by Administrative Convergence Action Team (ACAT)

■ Objective 2.2

Improve Human Resources Management throughout USDA.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish requirements for training and development of employees, supervisors, and managers.
- Develop employee and peer review surveys to assess managerial competency.
- Modernize the Human Resource Management systems and processes.
- Manage the integration of cultural diversity in the USDA workforce.
- Institutionalize a team-based culture.

Performance Measures

- Employee grievances

Baseline: Approximately 30 formal grievances (FY 1997)

Target: Reduce formal grievances by 50% per year

- Increased employee productivity and enhanced program delivery

Baseline: Current costs of HRM processes and systems

Target: Cost savings of 30% by FY 2002, with 15% annually thereafter, and redistribution of resources to training and modernization of other HRM systems and processes

■ **Objective 2.3**

Provide modern, efficient, and cost-effective procurement and property systems and processes, in concert with our customers, to support USDA programs.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Design, develop, test, and implement procurement and property systems that will deliver timely, cost-effective products and services.
- Implement USDA-wide the reengineered purchase card and convenience check processes.
- Utilize Performance Based Service Contracting (PBSC).

Performance Measures

- Use of Performance Based Service Contracting (PBSC)

Baseline: PBSC use is limited and inconsistent

Target: PBSC is used in all contracting, where appropriate

- Timely and cost-effective delivery of property processes and systems

Baseline: Current costs of property processes and systems

Target: An annual 5% decrease in systems operating costs

- Timely and cost-effective delivery of the purchase card and convenience checking process and system

Baseline: Current level of purchase card transactions for actions of \$2,500 or less

Target: An annual 20% increase in the number of purchase card transactions for actions of \$2,500 or less

Goal 3

Ensure responsible management and cleanup of hazardous materials and waste, and the responsible and efficient use of USDA buildings and space. (USDA-wide goal)

USDA promotes the responsible management of public lands and protects and restores critical forest land, rangeland, wilderness, and aquatic ecosystems. In coordination with the Forest Service (FS), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Office of the General Counsel (OGC), and other USDA agencies, DA will clean up and restore facilities and lands contaminated with hazardous waste, and will implement a hazardous material and waste management program that focuses on the effective use and conservation of natural resources and ensures that the workplace is healthy and safe.

DA

■ Objective 3.1

Clean up and restore facilities and lands contaminated with hazardous waste.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Administer and allocate funding for the USDA hazardous waste cleanup program.
- Oversee agency enforcement and cost recovery activities for consistency with USDA policy and procedures.
- Conduct monitoring and oversight reviews (clean-up schedules).

Performance Measures

- Number of sites requiring cleanup

Baseline: Approximately 2,000 USDA sites may need cleanup

Target: Will clean up or ensure the cleanup of 150 sites by 2002

■ Objective 3.2

Implement the Strategic Space Plan in the National Capital region to provide a safe and healthy workplace for USDA employees, better utilize USDA buildings and space, and reduce long-term leasing costs.

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Modernize the South Building and relocate staff from leased space to Beltsville.
- Accomplish physical security upgrades and achieve a realistic and effective security posture in the headquarters complex.

Performance Measures

- Use of available USDA office space

Baseline: 1.545M sq. ft. of leased space

Targets: Reduce leased space by 136,000 sq. ft. to 1.409M by 1999

Restoration of South Building will be 70% complete by 2002

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Goal 4

Provide services and products that meet or exceed customer expectations at a reasonable cost. (DA and USDA-wide goal)

USDA's administrative community will provide continuous improvement in program, product, and service delivery. We understand the diversity in organizational missions and operations and will issue reliable, timely, and value-added administrative policies and procedures that enhance the success of USDA's programs. We will have an administrative workforce that (1) clearly understands who our customers are, inside and outside the USDA, and (2) meets or exceeds our customers' expectations.

We will consult with Federal and public sector organizations to ensure that we are conducting our business in the most effective and efficient way to meet our customers' needs. We will listen carefully to our customers' issues and concerns.

■ Objective 4.1

Deliver efficient and effective administrative management to Departmental Administration's customers.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Evaluate existing systems, policies, and processes to ensure that customers are the main focus.
- Develop and implement a customer input and feedback process.
- Establish a baseline of service delivery effectiveness and cost.
- Develop and implement a customer service marketing strategy to increase customer satisfaction.

Performance Measures

- Customer satisfaction

Baseline: Perform an inventory to identify customer service training and technology requirements

Target: Train 20% of the DA workforce in customer service and effective communication techniques

■ Objective 4.2

Implement training and technology to enable mission areas and staff offices to deliver high-quality products and services.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Develop requirements for training and development of supervisors/managers.
- Develop and implement an organizational approach to training.
- Modernize DA's automated systems and practices.

Performance Measures

- Expertise of DA staff

Baselines: Define requirements and initiate training surveys
Perform technology assessment

Targets: Train 60% of supervisor/managers
Automate 35% of the administrative management systems within USDA

■ **Objective 4.3**

Improve customer service throughout USDA by institutionalizing effective quality management and business modernization practices.

Time Frame for Completion

December 2002

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

- Establish and implement a disciplined approach to identifying customer requirements and expectations, activities that create and support team-based organizations, and rewards and recognition programs.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive quality management program for all USDA employees.
- Pilot quality management initiatives within USDA agencies.
- Develop modernization practices that increase productivity and reduce costs of products and services.

Performance Measures

- Institutionalization of Quality Management

Baseline: No DA staff offices are currently implementing a quality management program

Targets: Develop a quality management methodology in 1998
Three DA staff offices will implement quality management in 1998
Three additional DA staff offices will implement quality management in 1999
Implement the quality management program in five USDA mission areas by 2002

Management Initiatives

In designing and implementing its programs, DA works in partnership with the USDA mission areas and staff offices, such as the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), and within the Departmental Administration organization. Through this network, and in response to customer feedback, numerous initiatives were recently undertaken in DA. Most notably, the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) conducted interviews and listening sessions with USDA customers and farmers to learn about civil rights in USDA. The Civil Rights Implementation Team (CRIT) is working to institutionalize the recommendations that resulted from the CRAT research into civil rights deficiencies in the Department.

Secretary Glickman recently requested DA, in co-leadership with the OCIO, to undertake administrative convergence of the county-based agencies (Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development). This planned administrative convergence will reduce redundant activities and simplify procedures, and can reduce costs.

DA's modernization of administrative processes includes in its customer base all USDA mission areas, staff offices, and employees who use administrative processes to support or deliver USDA programs. Several modernization projects, which include civil rights, human resources, procurement, quality management, and organizational development and change management, are in progress.

Linkage of Goals to Annual Performance Plan

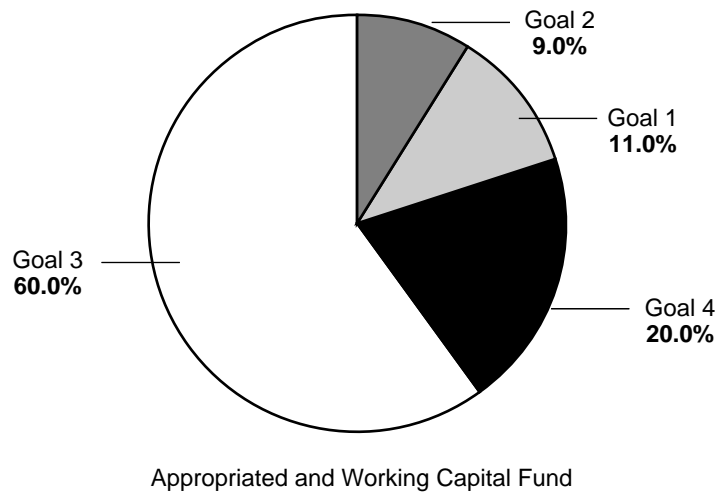
The goals in this strategic plan include qualitative measurements of the nature and direction of the desired outcomes. They are supported by baselines and targets outlined in each organizational plan and other planning documents. These are the bases for the annual performance plans which will contain additional breakdowns of the baselines and targets by fiscal year. In the FY 1999 Annual Performance Plan a projected completion of 25% of our long-term goals will be accomplished.

Annual performance measures in the form of specific outputs and expected outcomes have been established for each of the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. The achievement of these outputs and outcomes will be tracked annually to assess DA's progress towards achieving its strategic goals and objectives. The resources (FTEs and funding) indicated in the annual performance plans are critical to achieving the annual performance goals for that year. There is a direct link between the performance measures and goals of the annual performance plan and the goals and objectives of the strategic plan (5 Years).

Resources Needed

DA will continue to maximize program results within available resources and consequential adjustments resulting from a balanced Federal budget. The day-to-day DA workload has been accomplished at the current resource level by implementing a streamlining plan that resulted in reducing staff by about 15 percent since 1993, and going through several reorganizations to improve efficiency and effectiveness. New mandates have added responsibilities in the civil rights and administrative convergence areas, and DA must also correct longstanding functional deficiencies that have been pointed out by USDA and other oversight reviews. Workload redistribution, further reinvention efforts, partnerships, and resource sharing (including funding and staffing support for business modernization initiatives) will allow DA to accomplish a large percentage of the tasks and objectives required to meet the strategic plan goals. However, the strategic plan, as submitted, requires some additional resources that will be included in the President's annual budget request if DA is to successfully support USDA mission areas and programs as the administrative areas of USDA agencies are also reduced.

FY 1997 DA Budget Allocation



Program Evaluation

There are documented baselines for various segments of DA. The baselines, combined with analysis of the gaps between the baselines and the goals, provided a realistic and accurate assessment of DA, and identified where DA needed to focus its resources to achieve the desired organizational culture and effectiveness. We also conducted surveys of DA's internal and external customers, partners, and stakeholders. To assess the effectiveness of the objectives and tasks for attaining the stated goals, we intend to conduct quarterly and annual reviews of goals, objectives, and accomplishments and refine or perform corrective action as necessary. In addition, we will establish performance standards for all managers and employees to ensure accountability for accomplishing our goals and objectives. We will also continue to respond to General Accounting Office and Office of Inspector General audits, to implement the recommendations of the Civil Rights Action Team, and to conduct and respond to customer surveys.

The Role of External Entities

Customers and stakeholders identified a number of the most important external factors, such as Congressional appropriations; OMB streamlining goals; regulatory reform; technological change; and environmental, safety, and health requirements. Internal feedback included recommending eliminating unnecessary internal rules and policies that interfere with improving processes and that do not add value. Sound business decisions, both external and internal, require integrated programs, systems, and processes supported by timely, accurate, and meaningful information. Agencies and customers outside of the DA have played a significant role in the development of this plan, and will continue to play a significant role in implementing DA's strategic plan, annual performance plans, and administrative management business process modernization efforts. The plan was prepared by federal personnel.

